

Madurai Sanitary Workers' Protest Over Outsourcing and Wages Intensifies, MP Criticizes Police Action.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/sanitary-workers-stir-enters-second-day-in-madurai-mp-slams-police/articleshow/123392698.cms>

The strike by sanitary workers in Madurai entered its second day, with unions including the CITU, LPF, and LLF leading the agitation against Government Order 152, which permits the outsourcing of conservancy work to private contractors. Workers argue that outsourcing deprives them of job security, fair wages, and benefits that would otherwise be available under direct corporation employment. Their demands include the withdrawal of the order, wage hikes, bonuses, and regularization of their services, as they fear that contractor-based employment strips them of entitlements and protections under labor law.

The protest has seen heightened police intervention, with nearly 200 workers detained on the first night of the stir and released the following morning. Security has been tightened around the corporation office, with entry restrictions causing confusion among the public. Despite this, the workers regrouped near the Ambedkar statue and continued their sit-in, signaling that they would not relent until their demands were addressed. The corporation has responded by claiming that steps such as wage revisions and bonus payments have already been taken, though union leaders maintain that these measures fall short as long as outsourcing remains in effect.

Political support for the workers came from Madurai MP Su Venkatesan, who sharply criticized the police for what he described as intimidation tactics and faulted the government for aligning with contractors instead of addressing workers' grievances. He stressed that sanitary workers play a vital role in maintaining the city's health and dignity, and suppressing their protests only worsens mistrust. While workers have agreed to pause escalation until a tripartite meeting with corporation officials, the contractor OurLand, and labor authorities is held, they have also announced plans for a larger demonstration at the district collectorate, making it clear that the struggle is far from over.